Ist Part:

L'ASSOCIATION BELGE D'ETUDE ET DE PROTECTION DES ANIMAUX RARES - A.S.B.L

PRESENTATION

A. What is ABEPAR?

The "Association Belge d'Etude et de Protection des Animaux Rares" ASBL or ABEPAR created at the beginning of 1993, is the first European French-speaking Association entirely devoted to cryptozoology.

The target of ABEPAR was to be an association specialised in this field, with the initial aim of setting up expeditions and finding the necessary funds.

However, we had to be make ourselves known both in the cryptozoological field and to the general public.

Thus, in April-May 1994, through the impetus of Doctor B. Heuvelmanns, the father of this discipline, the monthly review *"Cryptozoologie, le premier mensuel en français sur le sujet"* was published, addressed not only to the scientists but also to the general public...

B. ACHIEVEMENTS SINCE ITS CREATION

First of all, we tried to obtain support from the scientists interested in this kind of study. We soon found out that we had filled a vacuum and were thus able to enjoy their collaboration, especially that of Dr. Bernard Heuvelmanns, a Belgian zoologist who for over half a

century has been fighting for acquainting the official scientific institutions with this special branch of zoology. Today he is considered the leading light of this discipline. He was the one to coin the expression *"cryptozoology"* (etymologically: the study of hidden animals). Thanks to him, throughout the world, many scientists have officially or privately been studying these issues.

The Press was then made aware of our existence, especially following our project of setting up a first expedition to the Central African Republic. In Belgium, *La Dernière Heure* dedicated the whole of page 3 to us in its edition dated 15/6/93. *Le Vif - L'Express* three full pages (15/7/93), not to mention *Le Soir* of January 15-16th 1994. Others offered us a column or a short article, such as *Vlan*, on 08/09/93 or *Science & Nature* in October 93, and recently again *Le Soir* (27/07/95).

About 20 press articles concerning the association and its activities have been written until now (see enclosure for examples). These were completed by several radio interviews and an announcement on colloque '98, during the weekly Belgian television magazine *"Le jardin extraordinaire"* dated 07/2/98.

C. ACHIEVEMENTS OF ABEPAR SINCE ITS CREATION

Cryptozoology

In April 1994, we created the first French-speaking monthly magazine on cryptozoology. Since its creation, it has continuously been evolving towards greater professionality in its presentation, with the

purpose of being diffused in bookshops in Belgium, first, then in France, before covering Switzerland and Quebec.

Still for promotion purposes, the Association concentrated on developing further fields of activity.

School Activities

Since 1994, several conferences were held in the schools of Belgium.

These conferences were very successful with the children.

Public Conferences

Despite our having already held a series of conferences in 1993, namely at the Free University of Brussels, 1995 was to be the year in which such activity was fully developed within our association.

A *cryptozoological circle* open to all and meeting on a monthly basis was born from this initiative.

Scientific Expeditions

Coming back to the objective underlying the creation of the association, a first expedition was organised in December 1993-January 1994. Its purpose was to bring home first hand testimonies on a mysterious amphibious feline which the people in the Republic of Central Africa refer to as the "Water Panther". The undertaking was a success, even going beyond its target in a certain sense: the discovery of a skin at the home of a local made it possible to extend the distribution area of another feline which even the locals hardly knew, the African golden cat *Felis*.

In August 1998, we were invited to take part in a scientific expedition in Norway on and around lake Seljordsvatnet, in the Province of Telemark. The objective was the search supported by important technological means for an animal similar to the Loch Ness monster. A 20-minute film representing a large animated aquatic object incited us to organise another expedition this summer.

Theme Journeys

In association with tourist bodies and agencies, ABEPAR has setup a project of theme journeys aimed at bringing small groups of people interested in cryptozoology on the field.

During these journeys, we propose observation excursions, evidence collecting, conferences on the issue, meetings with specialists.

During the summer of 1999, we will for the fourth consecutive time propose an expedition to the Loch Ness.

Participation in Cultural Events

In 1994, A.B.E.P.A.R. took part in several cultural events in Belgium. We also participated in the Belgium preview of the film *Loch Ness*, on July 7th 1996.

Creation of Two Cryptozoology Symposiums

The first European symposium on cryptozoology was organised in Brussels in February 1997. The title was: *Dragons, Monsters & Demons: Zoological Legends and Realities.*

The second European symposium took place in February 1998 on the theme: *Mermaids, Water Snakes and Sea Monsters.*

Today, the third European symposium you are attending has been organised in Rome thanks to our friends and colleagues from the Italian Natural Parks.

Creation of an Internet Site

Thanks to the sponsoring of the conceiver of Internet sites Zigzag, the association has had its own site since a few months.

D. CONCLUSION

Today, through our actions, our association is well established in the cryptozoological circles and promotion with the public is also being pursued actively. thanks namely our symposiums of which the present one is the outcome.

IS THE *YETI* THE BROWN BEAR?

Presentation of the book by Reinhold Messner
"Yeti - Legende und Wirklichkeit"
and debate

By François de SARRE, *sociologist*

The recent publication of the book written by the Italian mountaineer Reinhold Messner - *"Yeti - Legende und Wirklichkeit" ["The Yeti - Legend and Reality"]* - published by S. Fischer in Frankfurt, gave rise to many reactions, especially in the German-speaking countries where its appearance had been cleverly organised.

The books is attractive; the middle contains splendid panoramas of Tibet and the neighbouring countries, portraits, scenes of daily-life in the Himalayas.

Yet no *Yeti* is to be found, at least not the one you would expect: the *Yeti* presented by Messner is nothing but the brown bear, *Ursus Arctos*!

The sensational photos "promised" for years are those of a modest-size brown bear encountered in the Kashmir region. The book also contains quite a suggestive picture taken in a Tibetan monastery of a stuffed bear.

However, let us go back to the facts from the very beginning. In 1986, teleprinters throughout the world spread information about a meeting between Reinhold Messner and the *Yeti*, somewhere in eastern Tibet:

"It was much bigger than me, strong and hairy, with long brownish-black hairs which covered its eyes. It was standing on two

legs and as soon as I set my eyes on it, I realised it fitted all the descriptions made by the Sherpas and Tibetans."

The Italian mountaineer, Reinhold Messner, was the first to climb the world's 14 over 8000 m peaks. In 1978, he climbed the Everest without oxygen supply. Owing to his perfect knowledge of the Himalayas, Messner decided to pursue his search for the identity of the *Yeti*. From 1986 to 1998, after about 30 expeditions and 20'000 km in the Himalayas and the Karakorum, the South Tyrolean thought he had *definitively* solved the Yeti enigma. That is at least what he says in his book. *"I was successful because I have been to the Himalayas more often than the others"*, says Messner, in substance.

For Messner, the situation is clear: a wild animal in the Tibetan mountains, namely a large-size bear, turns into a "monster" and fabulous creature back down in the valleys. All the way to Nepal where the Sherpas conveyed the myth.

When Shipton's famous footprint went round the world in 1951, the Western press wasted no time in picking up the story, thus strengthening the myth of the *Yeti*. Did a giant primate, a survivor of prehistory, perhaps an intermediate link between the ape and man, live in the Himalayas?

The "Yeti hunt" began, and more intensively so after Edmund Hillary and Tensing Norgay's conquest of the Everest in 1953 which had further increased the interest of the public for the Himalayan range and its mysterious inhabitant. Expeditions were undertaken by the *Daily Mail* (1954) and Tom Slick (1957, 1958, 1959), followed by the *World Book* (1960).

For most experts, among whom Bernard Heuvelmanns, the most plausible candidate to the zoological identity of the *Yeti* was an anthropomorphic ape, still unknown to science, which lived in the mountain forests of Nepal.

The size of a teenager, it is reddish-brown, with a conical, egg-shaped head. A larger dark or black creature - 2.50m - supposedly lived on the northern slopes of the Himalayas. Some put forward that the "small" yetis were young individuals belonging to the same species as the "big" ones, a hypothesis which seemed to have been corroborated when Messner, in 1997, announced that he had taken a photo of a *black* female yeti and her offspring with *reddish-brown* fur. [The document, supposing it exists, has not yet been published]. Currently, cryptozoologists agree in considering two distinct forms: one *(Gigantopithecus?)* can be seen from Tibet to Malaysia; the other *(Sivapithecus?)* is essentially Nepalese.

However, let's come back to Messner's book, and to his first encounter with the *Yeti*, in July 1986. Some details help in identifying his position: Eastern Tibet, in the mountain valley of Mekong. However, Messner himself stresses that the names of the places he mentions are false *"to prevent people from hunting down the animal"*.

In any case, he supposedly saw *"something big, dark, walking upright, emerging from the rhododendrons about thirty steps away from where he was standing... "*.

The story has already changed somewhat since 1986, when Messner said: *"I saw it at a distance of ten meters. It was a mixture between a man and an ape. It immediately moved away"*.

In the 1998 book, the creature caught sight of at dusk was soon to turn into a bear... Here are some passages:

"I held my breath while I watched the dark and silent mass run through the bushes. What could that be trotting along alone in the woods enjoying the dusk? When the being returned to the clearing, I saw a figure of impressive size, planted firmly on its feet. It remained silent for a time before turning round and merging into the dark.

What was it? I remained motionless, looking around, listening carefully, aware of the different scents rising from the earth. While I cautiously approached the place from where the creature had appeared, I noticed a hollow in the damp ground. A footprint was outlined in the black mud. The footprint of a giant human foot! I took a photo. My feet did not sink into the mud as deeply. I inferred that the creature was much heavier than me.

While I observed the footprint, I remembered the famous one photographed in the snow by Eric Shipton in 1951. It was considered the strongest evidence as to the existence of the yeti.

Was it an animal of that kind? For me, the Yeti had until then only been an age-old legend, and nothing more! It belonged to the Himalayan commonplaces, together with the frozen peaks, the snow blizzards and the freezing winter nights. The Sherpas had often told me about the yeti, the women it abducted, the yaks it eviscerated and of course the gigantic footprints it left in the snow.

That very evening, I saw the footprints another four times. The animal had climbed the slope and must have been slightly further up. I then heard a whistle similar to that of a chamois giving alarm. On my

right, I saw a two-legged creature running, disappearing and reappearing from behind the trees. For a moment, it stood motionless in the moonlight, its head turned in my direction. It whistled. In a flicker, I caught sight of the beast's face: the eyes and teeth, though not the shape or colour, stood out against the black silhouette. The creature was facing threateningly. It was hairy and stood on two short legs; its strong arms almost hang down to its knees. I considered it was over two meters tall. Its body seemed much more sturdily built than that of a man of the same size; I was as astonished as I was afraid at seeing the beast move through the bushes which such ease".

Messner reported that the animal ran *on its four legs* towards the top of the slope. The Italian mountaineer told some Nomads he was staying with about his misadventure: *"Chemo!"* they answered... Normally, they live further down in the woods, while at the height of summer, they follow the yak herds - their prey - and cross the snowy hills to move from one valley to the next.

When Messner inquired whether a *chemo* was a bear, they answered: *"No, he is not a bear. He is both a bear and a man. He carries his children on its back. He eats what we eat. He lives where we live. He blinks like a human being when he is blinded by the sun. Though he looks like a bear or a very big ape".*

This is the very passage of the book where Reinhold Messner peremptorily affirms: *"For me, the mystery of the Yeti had at last been solved!".*

The Tibetan legends on the *yeti* were born in those and other valleys, while the myth had taken root further down, in the villages.

where the most grotesque tales were told. The *chemo* bear, which gave rise to the whole story, was completely forgotten...

Disproportionate footprints, feeding habits, dens, everything confirms that it is indeed the brown bear *(Ursus arctos)* which reigns at night over the frozen expanses where man believes he is the master during the day.

From now on, the whole book revolves around the theme of the *bear-yeti*. Reinhold Messner does indeed touch on the hypothesis of a late *Gigantopithecus* (without even once mentioning the name of Bernard Heuvelmanns!) and on several elements from the dossier on the wild men of Eurasia whose zoological status he does not mention.

The mountaineer from South-Tyrol wonders whether a large ape can live - and feed - at such an altitude. He admits that the tracks discovered in the snow could belong to animals moving occasionally from one forested valley to another.

The yeti is of course incorrectly considered a mountain animal. Its habitat is in the mountain forests, namely in Nepal, between 2'800 and 4'500 meters; those areas are covered by very dense vegetation and, moreover, practically impenetrable to man due to the uneven ground and deep ravines. It is plausible to imagine that a large anthropoid could still live in a natural environment so hostile to observation, *without ever having been photographed or filmed.*

Set in his belief of a "bear-yeti", Reinhold Messner repeats throughout the book that the *chemo* (or *chemong*) is a big brown bear, well known to the inhabitants of the Himalayas. Its embellished legend reached Nepal; the Westerners, attracted by the sensational

side of the story - the discovery of the intermediate link between the ape and man and/or possible survival of the fossil form of large ape - contributed towards sustaining the myth. Bhutan issued a stamp bearing effigy of the *yeti*, while the latter has become an object of marketing in Kathmandu: *yetis* can be seen on T-shirts and other articles for sale. The Nepalese government, spurred by the Sherpas - who looked forward to awakening the curiosity of western *trekkers* -, was soon to discover the virtues of the yeti in terms of tourist attraction...

Therefore, according to Messner, the *yeti* is a kind of a cross between a real animal (*Ursus arctos*) and a fantasy, a pure product of human imagination: the monster, abductor of women, demon of the night, whose attitude is not ruled by any moral "code of conduct", free to do even the most shameful things.

This explains a certain *anthropomorphic* trend, a neologism which means that the creature gradually takes on an anthropomorphic appearance, namely, in this case, that of a big ape, *due to the almost human feelings it is given*..

This would explain the cultural objects, such as masks, scalps or remains attributed to the *ape-yeti*, used in Tibetan or Sherpa religious ceremonies.

In Bhutan, Messner even found - and photographed - what appeared to be the remains of a young anthropoid presented by the monks as a "red" yeti. He thought it was a setup and was much more interested, in Mai 1997, by a stuffed bear he discovered hanging under the porch of a Tibetan monastery in Kham. The animal, placed in an

intimidating position, is nowhere near a giant of its species, yet for Messner it is a convincing proof that the brown bear, called *chemo*, is the yeti.

After having lost a film which contained many of the footprints in the snow, and a lot of misfortune in the photo-hunt of the *chemo* in eastern Tibet, Reinhold Messner was more successful in Kashmir, in August of the same year.

Locally known as *"chemo"*, the bear-yeti came to the appointment with the camera. These are the photos which are presented in the book, thus putting an end to around 12 years of investigations and research work on the field.

Is the yeti the brown bear? In fact, the hypothesis is not new. As to the issue of the footprints attributed to the "man of the snow", of course one could think they belong to bears which often stand on their back legs but do not cover long distances in the erect position. Like the British zoologist John Napier, Messner suggests that the snow bear, in this case the *Ursus arctos isabellinus*, usually places its back legs right into the footprints of its front legs. The footprints of the back paws of a bear do in any case look quite similar to those of a man; however, as recalled by Bernard Heuvelmanns, the fifth toe is the biggest. The claws do no necessarily leave traces. Shipton's famous footprint - perhaps somewhat "improved" by the author's ice axe - could belong to a bear. The trail crossed in 1955 by Father Bordet, a geologist accompanying the French expedition to Makalu, was followed for over one kilometre and appeared to better fit the profile of a biped anthropoid. The footprint was about 20cm long,

with steps at a distance of about 50cm from each other. The footprints bore a certain similarity with a human foot; 4 toes were visible, the first *turned inwards* was the biggest; the footprints were perfectly in line, jutting out to the left or the right at each stride, which would imply that the trail had indeed been left by a creature walking on its back legs only.

To support the hypothesis of the bear-yeti, Reinhold Messner tells us about the story of a German ethnologist, Ernst Schäffer, who towards the end of the 30s travelled throughout Tibet under the commission of Adolf Hitler. The nazis in fact believed that the Nordic race had a special origin and searched the Himalayas for their pan-germanic ancestor who was resistant and insensitive to cold temperatures. Of course Ernst Schäffer had been interested in the Yeti, nevertheless he reached the conclusion that it was the Tibetan bear: *"When the latter stands on its back legs, it looks like a human being; it can be distinguished from the other bears by thicker fur, longer hairs and a larger skull in proportion with the body".*

Apparently Eric Shipton contacted Ernst Schäffer, asking him not to publish his work in English for fear of losing the credits allocated for future expeditions in the Himalayas...

All this is told in Messner's book. Of course, the bear might have inspired some of the Himalayan legends, yet it seems unlikely to have been at the foundation for *all* the evidence on the yeti. A recent example (September 1998) was given by the American mountaineer, Craig Calonica, who saw two black-furred creatures walking upright

with a stoop, at an altitude of about 6000m, on the Chinese side of the Everest: *"Their arms were very long and their hands very big"*.

We are nowhere near knowing everything about the bears of central Asia whose systematisation appears to be quite confused. Perhaps some are real giants, like the brown bears on the Kodiak island, in Alaska.

The *"chemo"* described by Messner at the beginning of his book, the one he first met in 1986, is in any case rather uncommon for a bear: it whistles, runs upright with ease, is not really huge (2m). Its apparently exclusively nocturnal habits puzzle zoologists; the South-Tyrolean mountaineer fails to immediately identify the moonlit silhouette as a bear which is *a priori* easy to recognise - round years on the top of the head, a face characterised by a long muzzle.

Nevertheless, in the following pages, Messner makes the reader consider the mysterious creature as a being bear and nothing else. He notices that the Tibetan Nomads he talks to tend to *humanise* it - he carries his "children" on his back -, ascribing it human behavioural features. No one is astonished that it kills yaks by throwing large stones at them. Or that it abducts young women to bring them to its den.

The *chemo = yeti* equation seems to prevail, though it is hasty: it would be more correct to say that it is just *one* of the many sides of the yeti phenomenon.

The brown bear is part of the mystification process - the *"chemo"* of the Tibetan mountaineers - sustaining the myth around the yeti by its different manifestations. Thus, in Nepal, the relatively large

Thus, according to these sources, the Ladakh skeleton had apparently been purchased in June 1997; a week later, Messner photographed a mother yeti and her child, and then filmed a sleeping yeti. In his book, at around the same date, the South-Tyrolean relates the episode of the stuffed bear at the Kham monastery, in Eastern Tibet. It wasn't before August that he travelled to Kashmir where he only photographed brown bears against the background of a Himalayan mountain valley. The very ones which have a central place in its book.

That is where the adventure ended. The tracking of the *yeti* ends on a rather bucolic note. After reading the book, the exploration and sociocultural aspect will be retained. The Italian mountaineer, a great connoisseur of the Himalayas, has carefully established friendship ties with the Sherpas and Tibetans whose customs he illustrates in his book. Often alone, he has travelled throughout the huge areas where the legend situates the fabulous *yeti.* Undeniably, Reinhold Messner's field book represents an essential piece of work to be included in the large dossier on the Great Stranger of the Himalayan range.

Is this the beginning of a sort of "*yetimania*"? The primate specialist, Volker Sommer, in his book *"Die Grossen Menschenaffen"* (BLV, Munich, 1998), writes about the thesis of the orang-utan surviving in the mountain valleys of Nepal. Langen Müller Herbig has announced the coming publication of a book by the mountaineer Bruno Baumann, one of Messner's "rivals" both in the mountains and in conference halls because Baumann favours the theory of the big nocturnal primate unknown to science.

In any case, Reinhold Messner relentlessly repeats: *"In 10 or 20 years, everyone will agree with me in saying that the yeti is the brown bear"*. In the meantime, he has entrusted all his data and archives to the American primatologist, George Schaller for study purposes.

At the beginning of his book, Reinhold Messner meets the *yeti*; at the end, it is no longer the *yeti*.

The mystery still hovers over the Himalayan immensities while scientific truth is long to come.

The Italian mountaineer has had the great merit of putting in a token appearance on the field, and of acquainting us with the *yeti* story from an unusual viewpoint... We regret the absence of a bibliographic index. All useful information appears to have been gleaned from the Internet.

"Yeti – Legende und Wirklichkeit" – whose publication in English has been announced by Macmillan – is in any case an excellent book containing very beautiful illustrations and I can only recommend it to all keen cryptozoologists.

CENTRO PARCHI PARKS CENTRE

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ABRUZZO NATIONAL PARK
THE CONSERVATION EFFECT OF AN ECO-DEVELOPMENT SUCCESS-CASE

1. - PRESENTATION

The **Abruzzo National Park**, created in 1922 and therefore the oldest in Italy, is internationally considered as pilot-organisation in nature conservation: an example that most of the modern Parks, not only in our Country, are trying to imitate. During the last quarter of the Century the history of our Park has been marked by continuous and innovating efforts devoted to meet the urgent needs of nature protection adn those of development. The Abruzzo National Park was the first one to show - not only theoretically but in practice - that the protection of the environment has positive effects and economic advantages such as income and employment. Moreover, it has promoted controlled cultural visits in the Park, has "invented" a special agreement system with local Communities in order to overcome the controversies in the urbanistic field, has created the Zonation System in the territory in order to reconciliate protection and development: in other words, has managed with success a policy of "eco-development", based mainly on the modern "eco-tourism".

The real projects carried out for the first time in a large and modern Italian National Park range from the first **Visitor Centre** among Italian National Parks, created in 1969 in Pescasseroli, to the first scientific group working in a European Park, the **Apennine Centre for Ecological Research**, created in 1972; from the first **Wildlife Area** for the Apennine Wolf at Civitella Alfedena, created in 1971, to the first **Strict Nature Reserve**, the Camosciara, created in 1972.

The Abruzzo National Park has achieved impressive results for the protection of the most endangered species, creating the **Italy Wolf Group** for the protection of the Apennine Wolf in 1974, the **Italy Chamois Group** for the safeguard of the Abruzzo Chamois in 1978, the **Italy Bear Group** for the protection of the Abruzzo Brown Bear in 1983, whilst in 1993 the **Italy Lynx Group** has been created to substain the "return" of this wonderful feline in our Country. Furthermore, from 1977, the Park hosts the **Italian Committee for National Parks and Equivalent Reserves**, engaged in the creation and support of a vast "system" of protected areas, including both land and sea, in Italy. Then the Park has launched in 1993 the **Biodiversity Project** for the acknowledgement and the richness tutelage and variety of flora and fauna around us. Finally , the Park created in 1994 the **Park Centre** in Rome, in order to

COMITATO PARCHI NAZIONALI E RISERVE ANALOGHE - ITALIA -

Creato nel 1994 come Operazione speciale di sinergia ambientale tra due delle più autorevoli e antiche istituzioni Italiane di Conservazione - il Parco Nazionale d'Abruzzo, un'Organizzazione Pubblica sorta nel 1922, e il Comitato Parchi Nazionali e Riserve Analoghe, un'Organizzazione non Governativa nata nel 1977 - il **Centro Parchi** costituisce oggi il principale punto di riferimento sull'autentica realtà della Conservazione della Natura in Italia.

Created in 1994 as a joint-venture by two of the most authoritative and ancient Italian Conservation Institutions - the Abruzzo National Park, a Public Agency established in 1922, and the Italian Committee of National Parks and Nature Reserves, a Non-Governmental Organization born in 1977 - the **Parks Centre** *is the main reference point about the true situation of Nature Conservation in Italy.*

Parco Nazionale d'abruzzo

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promote a better knowledge and awareness in the field of Nature Conservation through Protected Areas.

Those who wish to acquire a deeper information about of the Park have just to contact one of its Visitor Centres including a Wildlife Area, such as: Civitella Alfedena for the Apennine Wolf and the Lynx, Opi and Bisegna for the Abruzzo Chamois and Villavallelonga for the Red Deer, without forgetting the renewed Pescasseroli Visitor Centre, adjacent to the well-known Wildlife Park and to the new Apennine Garden. Visitors can also address themselves to the various local Information offices of the Park, open all year round and placed in the main villages. A rich series of publications provides full information and orientation.

2. - THE ECO-DEVELOPMENT OF ABRUZZO NATIONAL PARK

We would like to examine more closely the history of Abruzzo National Park, in Italy, which was considered lost 25 years ago, but is now recovering, thanks to an agressive and innovative policy which consists, first of all, in reversing almost all previous statements, methods and styles. Among them, the old and primitive dilemma assuming that in such marginal areas there is no place enough for man and wildlife - as the villagers in Abruzzo used to say: "before thinking to the bear, care of men!" - an idea now perhaps on the verge of extinction, since the success of the Park, not only in preserving wildlife and scenary, but also in granting economical benefits to the local population, clearly demonstrates that local wealth cannot be associated with bear destruction, but badly needs its preservation! In the case of Abruzzo, we may very well say that contraints acted as a stimulus to explore new, more imaginative and vigorous policies!

The central question has been how to protect bears and wolves, while at the same time enabling people to experience a new model of sustainable development, based on a reasonable exploitation of local resources, in order to secure long-term conservation of the basic heritage.

The main aims of the National Park - Conservation, Education, Scientific Research - are of course to be emphasized, but also new relevant effects of a new situation and policy have to be considered: Eco-development, and especially Eco-tourism, a fast-growing industry producing at the same time significat benefits and potential risks for environment. We prefer nevertheless to speak of "cultural visit", a very soft kind of tourism, wich occurs as well in historical, archeological and artistic sites as in natural areas.

COMITATO PARCHI NAZIONALI E RISERVE NATURALE - ITALIA -

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This may be possible through a very complex and sophisticated policy: clear legislation, vigorous Park Authority and modern planning, based essentially on zonation criteria: **Zone A**= Strict Nature Reserve (don't leave anything but images and pictures), **Zone B**= General Nature Reserve (conciliation with traditional activities and populations), **Zone C**= Soft Protection (sustainable ecological production), **Zone D**= Development (we insist, Development: instead of simply controlling what happens, this means to orientate the process in a sustainable way, taking the leadership of the future of such strategic areas): for instance encouraging restauration of ancient villages instead than allowing the realisation of new expensive villas and condominiums and so on. By this policy, profits do not flow to the plains, but stay now in the hands of local inhabitants.

In this context, special management criteria and structures - example given, Visitor/Information Centres, Wildlife Areas and others - proved to be invaluable tools to minimize the visitors' impact as well as to maximize their environmental perception. For instance, with a small investment one old stable became a Wolf Museum, covering not only biology but also tales, history and traditions; and an adjacent field turned into an Apennine Wolf Wildlife Area - we could say a "Wolf Embassy" - with a pack of captive wolves bred in seminatural conditions, playing an essential role in destroying the legend of the "bad wolf".

3. - *PARK'S BENEFITS FOR LOCAL PEOPLE*

The classic example of this new policy is Civitella Alfedena, a small village with 300 inhabitants in the heart of the Park, which was virtually on the way to be abandonned 25 years ago, and has found now, with a growing economy and with the return of emigration, a new strength and hope for the future, becoming a centre of activities and services for the Park. And in december 1989 it shocked Italy coming at the first place, in the classific of deposits. Some simple figures may show the situation: 5 billion liras of Park budget actually develop a local economic impact of about 300 billion liras, created in the Park itself 200 jobs (80 permanent and 120 temporary) and about 1.000 more jobs in indirectly related activities. Small enterprises flourished in number: at least 1.600, mostly familiar. No big business for one, but spreading benefits for many.

So, trends changed and new interests grew for the whole area of Abruzzo: involving in conservation activities young volunteers, especially as guides to control "limited number access", respecting ancient religious tradictions, developing typical forms of skills and handcrafts, and marketing selected local products with a special quality mark, managed by the Park Authority.

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The evidence of the Park role in the ransom of this area was so clear, that a local Bank asked - and obtained on the basis of special agreements - to use the emblem of the Park with the well known bear logo even on its cheques: thus associating the idea of conservation not with failure and stagnation, but with wealth and success.

4. - GOALS ACHIEVED ALSO IN WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT

In about a quarter of a century, the Apennine heritage of fauna - and especially of the most typical big fauna of the Central Apennines - has passed from minimal levels to a much more positive and promising situation, with unexpected developments - both in terms of quality and quantity - which aroused the increasing interest of external and abroad observers.

This is largely due, in all probability, to the original conservation strategy operated by the Abruzzo National Park, along innovative and anti-conventional criteria, starting from the moment of its re-organisation (1969), with the constant and whole-hearted support of the main environmental associations, particularly the World Wide Fund, Italy.

The essential trait of this strategy lies in its interdisciplinary and intersectorial approach which, although based on knowledge of the environmental, ecological and biological material world, is not limited only to that but goes far beyond it, embracing every aspect of the connected spiritual, cultural and social reality. In other words, it takes account of a basic eco-sociological perspective, which aims to discover the deepest roots of social behaviour (positive, indifferent and negative attitudes) concerning modern environmental problems, and thus orientates the conservation action according to a principle which is not only right and correct, but also suitable for concretely achieving the goals laid down.

The "revolutionary" character of such a strategy may be efficiently illustrated by considering the initiatives concerning protected animals, for example, especially the big species of mammals typical of Apennine fauna: in particular not only the Marsican Brown Bear (*Ursus arctos marsicanus*) and the Abruzzo Chamois (*Rupicapra ornata*), the two species for the saving of which the Abruzzo National Park was created in 1922, but also the Apennine Wolf (*Canis lupus italicus*) and the European Lynx (*Lynx lynx*), in addition to less rare but rather significant species, such as the Red Deer (*Cervus elaphus hippelaphus*) and the Roe Deer (*Capreolus capreolus*).

To review the evolution of this special fauna in the Abruzzo National Park and in the Central Apennines can be instructive and surprising at the same time, especially from the year

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1969 onwards, the year in which the difficult task of reorganising the Park was undertaken and brought to completion over the course of over 25 years of intense work and stimulating campaigns.

At that time there were an estimated 60-80 Bears at the most. There was little hope of saving them, due to the apparently irreversible situation of accelerating degradation of the territory. Little or no attention was paid to the peculiarities of this isolated population, regarded as a mere relict, a southern nucleus of the normal European Brown Bear.

The Chamois, on the other hand, was regarded as a simple population, or geographical subspecies of the Alpine Chamois, surviving by chance, with 150-200 inter-related and vulnerable creatures, on the most inaccessible peaks of the Park and greatly threatened with extinction, mainly in connection with the epidemics likely to be caused by the invasive presence of domestic animals in the surrounding areas.

It was estimated that no more than 7-13 specimens of the Wolf, considered a "harmful" and "pest" animal to be eliminated as soon as possible, survived in the Park, reduced to lone scavengers searching for rubbish on the tips. Also in this case, no importance was attributed to the classification of Apennine populations, long isolated both geographically and reproductively from other nuclei of wolves surviving in Europe.

Even more negative seemed the situation of the Lynx, long thought to be extinct in Italy and totally non-existant in the Apennines. Many authoritative experts were indeed convinced that the hypothetical presence of such a feline in historical times was to be wholly excluded, and that all extant quotations on the subject actually refer to the Wild Cat.

Finally, the Red Deer and the Roe Deer were supposed to be completely absent from the wild not only in the Central Apennines, but throughout most of the Italian peninsula. The scarce autochthonous surviving populations (Red Deer in the Bosco della Mesola, Roe Deer in Castel Porziano, the Gargano and the Monti di Orsomarso) appeared too limited, fragile and differentiated to suggest their reintroduction into the Park. Moreover, the idea of such a reintroduction was strongly opposed by locals, hunters and even academics.

Hence, the situation was the following: at the moment of the start of the Park's recovery, 3 of the 6 most significant species of mammals were extinct, or considered so; while the other 3 were greatly endangered or even on the verge of extinction. Such surviving species numbered also very limited populations, consisting in the progeny of the few dozens specimens surviving when the Park was created (about 30 Bears and less than 30 Chamois estimated

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between 1920 and 1930): i.e., absolutely insufficient populations, according to modern conservation biology principles, in order to ensure the future of such valuable species.

The situation of the big fauna of the Abruzzo National Park and of other surrounding Protected Areas Parks sounds to be quite different and greatly improved today. The destiny of the Marsican Brown Bear appears brighter and the future of the Abruzzo Chamois is definitely promising. The rescue and diffusion of the Apennine Wolf has gone beyond every expectation, while the Lynx has registered a very important reappearance, largely unexpected to many, but officially confirmed by the Park's authorities in January 1994. The reintroduction of the Red Deer and Roe Deer became one of the most brilliant successes boasted by conservation in the Apennines and, after initial prejudices and criticism, is now largely imitated elsewhere. The revival of the ecosystem favours the increase or the return of other vulnerable animals, valuable indicators of environment quality. Among these it is worth mentioning the Otter (*Lutra lutra*), apparently absent for many years, but recently observed anew in the Park; the Porcupine (*Hystrix cristata*), which silently tends to occupy the hot and dry slopes at lower altitudes; the Golden Eagle (*Aquila chrysaetos*) of which there is an optimum density of pairs over the territory; the Goshawk (*Accipiter gentilis*) whose significant numbers indicate the presence of an ideal habitat: mature, natural, intact forest. Still more striking is the incidence of some stenoecious species, strictly linked to the big, ancient and decaying trees, and to semi-dessicated and decomposing trunks, such as the very rare White-backed Woodpecker (*Dendrocopos leucotos lilfordi*), present with around 250-300 pairs in the Park and bordering areas.

The live nature of the Park shall thus tend increasingly to reconstitute and consolidate itself in the future with ever richer, more diversified and stabler eco-systems, asking only to be observed discreetly and intelligently helped in critical phases. The hard-won investment in this quarter of a century shall in future decades bear not only cultural, ecological and scientific fruits, but also civil, social and economic benefits to the local population and the national and international communities which are interested in the future of this extraordinary Apennine fauna, which deserves consideration both as Italian and European heritage.

5. - PRESERVING A RICH BIODIVERSITY

In fact, the Park offers an enviable sample of "biodiversity", i.e. of a wealth and variety of fauna and flora. Thanks to the Biodiversity Project launched in 1994, it is now possible to provide some initial, non-definitive, information on this, through the preliminary check-lists concerning both the Park's territory and that of its Buffer Zone.

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The data on the flora would already appear to be highly significant, including a good 1900 species of superior Plants: so far a figure which will certainly increase upon further research, but already equivalent to almost a third of the entire Italian flora (in an area barely corresponding to a three-hundredth of the national territory!). Moreover, 323 species of Fungi, in the vast group of inferior Plants, have been recorded.

As far as the fauna is concerned, 336 species of Vertebrates have been recorded, subdivided as follows: 62 Mammals, 230 Birds, 16 Reptiles, 12 Amphibians and 16 Fishes. In the immense kingdom of the Invertebrates, it should be pointed out that the project, considering the vastness of the field of study, is just at its beginning; it is nevertheless already possible to list 2,826 species of Insects, among which the most representative orders appear to be distributed as follows: 1,534 Coleopterans, 447 Hemipterans, 306 Lepidopterans, 36 Plecopterans, 33 Odonatans and 12 Ephemeropterans.

In total 5,385 Plants and Animal species have thus been detected. However, the most complex and demanding part of this meticulous and ambitious work has yet to be developed. Large territories have still to be thoroughly explored, while some groups of plants and animals richer in species and difficult to classify are still under study.

6. - ***TOWARD AN INTEGRATED SYSTEM OF PROTECTED AREAS AROUND ABRUZZO NATIONAL PARK***

Thanks to the drive from the environmentalist movement, stimulated by the example of the Abruzzo National Park, the foundations are being laid for the establishment in the Central Apennines of an extensive system of National Parks and Protected Areas to ensure conservation of the principal mountain and forest ecosystems, working through the important symbolic force and key-point action of the so-called "lead species" or "animal leaders" which can express the highest values, thus ensuring implicit protection of all the other living components and of every other physical, geological, ecological and landscape component of these extraordinary environments.
Even a quick, superficial examination of this system, easily linked by a set of fauna-exchange corridors, shows that it substantially coincides with some of the strong points of Apennine Nature, specifically:

1.- The primary and secondary area of the Marsican Brown Bear
2.- The primary and secondary area of the Apennine Wolf
3.- The actual and potential area of the Abruzzo Chamois

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4.- The more or less recent historical area, and the area of reported new sightings of the European Lynx.

On the wave of Abruzzo National Park success and around this "*fulcrum*", a "system" of National Parks and other Protected Areas, is therefore coming into reality, the ARVE system, that means Abruzzo Green Region of Europe, the South European Park, with a total area of over 600,000 hectares. It will protect the most important nature assets of the Central Apennines as one of the most important "Green Areas" for the European Union of the Third Millennium.

National and Regional Parks
1 Abruzzo National Park - Buffer Area
2. Gran Sasso - Laga National Park
3. Majella National Park
4. Monti Sibillini National Park
5. Sirente - Velino Regional Park

Proposed new Parks
6. Monti Ernici-Simbruini Inter-Regional Park
7. Matese Inter-Regional Park

Nature Reserves, Refuges, Oases
In the "ARVE system" there are about 40 Reserves of varius types, some of which are to be incorporated in the new Parks. Proposals are also being studied on various other land and marine Reserves, to be created in future.

7. - A NEW POLICY FOR ITALIAN PARKS

The success of this experience was instrumental in allowing Italian Conservation Organisations, first of all WWF and the National Parks Committee, to develop broader strategies and campaigns: from "**The challenge of 10%**", launced in 1980 to protect, before the end of the Century, at last one tenth on the Country to "**The Year of the Parks**", presented in 1990 in order to establish a comprehensive Parks System on land and in the sea, with the idea of making Italy - once called "*Il Bel Paese*", The Beautiful Country - "**A Land of Green Parks**", surrounded by the Mediterranean, "**A Sea of Blue Parks**".

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Currently Italy has created, or is starting, more than 10 new National Parks, as well as many Regional Parks and a long series of Nature Reserves and other Protected Areas. The key-point is to-day an efficient management, in order to transform some "Paper-Parks" in realities: but the final goal of "The challenge of 10%" seems now possible, and perhaps a bit closer.

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ZONING OF THE ABRUZZO NATIONAL PARK

In order to better achieve its institutional purposes, the Abruzzo National Park was the centre of special planning efforts by means of the so-called Zoning System. This consists in subdividing the territory into various Zones subject to diversified protection and management systems. Each of them can meet man's manifold needs in an orderly and controlled manner, at the same time accepting a certain degree of sacrifice and self-restraint, which is absolutely necessary for the conservation of the natural environment, so that future generations can continue enjoying it.

The first stage consists in identifying the various differing Zones, owing to their characteristics and environmental values, as clearly and simply shown in the illustrated pictures. They show four Zones, clearly marked as A, B, C and D, representing the four various habitats in the Park.

The second stage establishes in every Zone a different system of protection or management, hence a special way of approach to each area as shown in the four pictures.

ZONE A - STRICT NATURE RESERVE

This is the Zone of real "wild nature". Exploitation and productive uses are abolished. The visitor can walk into it discretely, and must never leave the special beaten tracks. This zone is the realm of primeval flora and fauna, left to their spontaneous and free evolution.

In a word, Zone A is the realm of the untouched nature.

ZONE B - GENERAL RESERVE

This is a vast "green space" of forests and grasslands. It was already "humanised" by millennia of history, but remains substantially unspoiled, genuine and free of serious alterations or signs of imbalance. Activities of the past can continue developing here carefully and under control with a reasonable exploitation of natural resources for productive purposes (crafts, specialised animal husbandry, ad so on). The visitor finds here an ideal place for excursions and open-air life.

Zone B is substantially the meeting point where man and nature can coexist.

ZONE C - PROTECTION

This is classical "countryside". Agriculture and pastoral life can continue developing according to their tradition using non-industrialised agriculture and stock-raising, or, on the other hand, the most modern and biodynamic systems, enabling and encouraging the production of high quality food. The pre-existing precious culture of the past is carefully preserved and handed down to future generation.

Zone C is the area where nature was shaped and mastered for man's benefit.

ZONE D - DEVELOPMENT

This is the "inhabited" space. Here the old historical centres are restored, and enriched with cultural attractions in order to develop the life of local communities in close harmony and coexistence with the presence of visitors. This is an area where man can experience harmonious recreation in the open air, genuine culture and autenthic social contacts.

Zone D actually represents the really privileged area for social life, since it was culturally shaped according to man's needs. It is divided into three different subzones.

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Parco d'abruzzo NAZIONALE

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I. Subzone D1 - Inhabited Centres

This area includes the villages which already existed inside the Park. They can develop and expand according to standards and limits established by the Park's Authority and Local Authorities.

II. Subzone D2 - Reception Facilities

Pre-existing little buildings or houses and restricted Camping grounds in the Park. These places play a fundamental role in concentration, organisation and control of visitors and tourists.

III. Subzone D3 - Park Organisation

This means points of access to the Park and services connected with them such as parking sites and pic-nic areas, wildlife and nature observation points and Park's tourist Centres.

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22 The Abruzzo park experience in Italy

A model for the use of national parks to revitalize local economies as well as conserve nature is the Abruzzo National Park. The hallmarks of its approach are an autonomous park agency, acting on a clear Management Plan, implementing strong zonation and attempting to reconcile conservation with ecodevelopment. Despite many problems, the park has brought great benefits to local people, while effectively conserving the species, habitats and landscapes of the region. Indeed, there are now ambitious plans to expand Abruzzo, creating a 'South European Park' by establishing a surrounding network of protected areas over a massive 600,000 ha in the Central Apennines.

Abruzzo shows the value of an approach in which the national park combines conservation with cultural and local revival. It also shows the importance of having a model, so all can see that it works. This success has demonstrated to policy-makers that national parks are worthwhile and important.

At a national level, Italy is now planning 25 new national parks and about 70 new marine parks and reserves. To encourage their establishment, in 1990 the National Parks Committee and WWF–Italy launched their campaign 'A Land of Green Parks' surrounded by a 'Sea of Blue Parks'.

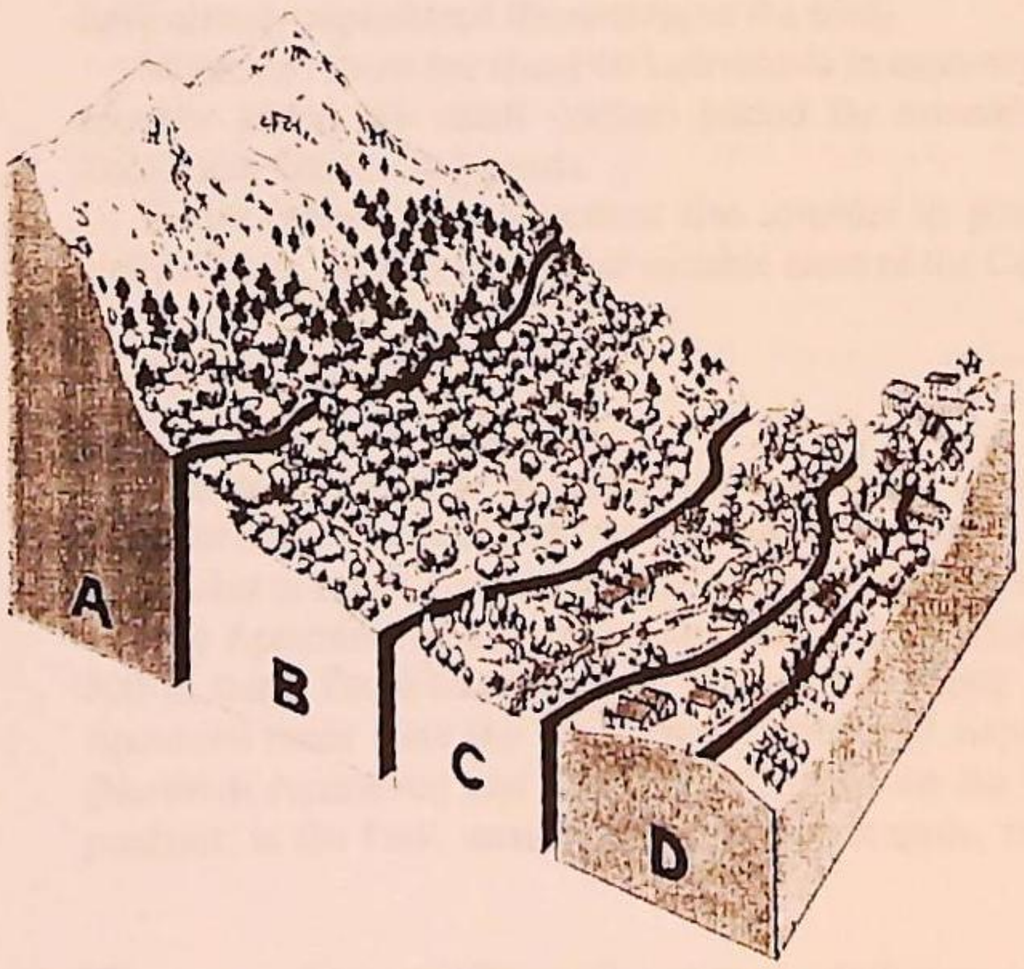
Twenty years ago, less than 1% of Italy was in protected areas. In 1980 conservationists issued their central and regional governments with a challenge: increase the protected areas estate to 10% of the land surface by the year 2000. In 1991 Parliament passed a framework law on protected areas and by 1994, 7% had been reached.

ACTION

5.2.1 Use protected areas as a way to revitalize rural economies.

Recommendation. Governments should see protected areas as a way, in many areas the best way, of reviving rural economies in marginal areas. The best way to develop this approach may by model parks, ideally one or more in each country.

Parco Nazionale d'Abruzzo. Reproduced with kind permission of National Parks Committee, Italy. Diagram created by F. Tassi, drawn by S. Maugeri



A schematic model of zonation in the Abruzzo National Park, Italy.

Key

A: Integral Reserve
B: General Reserve
C: Protected Landscape
D: Development zone

Priority Project 9. Organize a conference on the regeneration of rural economies and livelihoods through the establishment of national and regional parks. Participants should include protected area experts, government planners, economists and politicians. The conference should be held in a Mediterranean country where this approach exists or is needed. It should have a long planning phase, so as to give countries the opportunity to develop model parks beforehand. **Lead Agency:** to be appointed.

Estratto da:
PARKS FOR LIFE
Action for Protected Areas in Europe

IUCN
The World Conservation Union

Gland 1994

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CURRENT SITUATION OF BIG FAUNA IN ABRUZZO NATIONAL PARK

1. MARSICAN BROWN BEAR
(*Ursus arctos marsicanus*)

It is considered a strongly differentiated subspecies of the European Brown Bear, with distinctive morphological, genetic, ethological and ecological peculiarities.

The present remaining population is estimated at 70-100 individuals, the essential nucleus gravitating around the Park, while minor nuclei colonise other surrounding territories in the Central Apennines. Recent accurate research has categorically excluded that these external nuclei, which have always existed historically, might constitute the result of "escapes" from the park, while repeated observations would in some cases lend support to the thesis of a slow tendency to improvement. The population is thus vital and, maybe, slightly increasing: its expansion into the whole system of the Abruzzo Parks appears to be highly desirable.

Future objectives of protection comprise the enlarging of the Park in some critical areas and raising and breeding the species in captivity, to study and experiment the possibility of gradually reconditioning females with their cubs to the wild.

2. ABRUZZO CHAMOIS
(*Rupicapra ornata*)

There is a tendency to reappraise this as an autochthonous, even though young species (*incipient species*), neatly differentiated from any other European Chamois, including the izard of the Pyrenees (from which it appears to have been reproductively isolated for a very long time) due to morphology, genetic, ethology and ecology.

The present residual population includes about 600 individuals in the wild, about 500-550 living in the Park, and more or less 30 in each of the new Maiella and Gran Sasso-Laga Parks (they are small nuclei which have already reproduced themselves in the wild).

Moreover, there are about 60 individuals in captivity, distributed in 5 different Wildlife Areas to which was recently added the small nucleus hosted for scientific, reproductive and promotional reasons by Munich Zoological Garden in Bavaria.

Future conservation objectives also consider its possible reintroduction in the Monti Sibillini and Sirente-Velino Parks, as well as in other suitable areas of the Central Apennines.

3. APENNINE WOLF
(*Canis lupus italicus*)

The individuality of the Apennine population, characterised by morphological and ethological factors and reproductively isolated must be attentively evaluated in order to recognize in it a southern geographical subspecies of lesser dimensions than the European Wolf.

The Apennine Wolf's present population in the Park is estimated at around 40-50, with more or less 450-500 in Italy. There has thus been a quick and strong recovery, which has facilitated the reconquest of some Apennine areas (like the Appennino Dauno and Aspromonte), and even the colonisation of new territories (Northern Apennines and Maritime Alps, also on the French side). Still more interesting is the fact that this predator, in the Park, started to hunt in a pack again, regularly and successfully as a consequence of the return

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Parco Nazionale d'abruzzo

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of hoofed mammals, its favourite prey. A little known but quite important role is played by the wolf especially in colder, snowy winters: that of controlling the Wild Boar population (*Sus scrofa*), which is often not pure and has been introduced to the Apennines for hunting purposes. It is interesting to observe that Wolf damages to domestic animals are virtually non-existant in balanced rural areas where wild game is in plenty. This damage are found excessively elsewhere, in presence of consistent nuclei and packs of wild, abandonned and feral dogs. Given that 80% of damages claimed by shepherds and breeders are actually caused by such dogs, it may be assumed with certainty that it is the wolf which, in protected areas, eliminates them or drives them away thus contributing significantly to reduce harm to domestic animals.

Future protection goals consider the extension on a wider scale of the Park's conservation strategies as essential, with a series of initiatives: protection (the setting up of new protected areas); promotion (the creation of new Wildlife Areas for the Apennine Wolf) and compensation (swift and full payment of compensations for any damage to domestic animals).

4. LYNX

(*Lynx lynx*)

In Italy, the presence of the Lynx in the western and eastern Alps as well as in the Apennines (mostly central) has by now been widely demonstrated and cannot be seriously disputed. However, while some experts tend to consider it as a result of the re-introduction carried on successfully beyond the Alps (France, Switzerland, former Yugoslavia) - a fact which would not anyway explain its presence in the Apennines - it is likely that vestigial nuclei of this feline, which has a remarkably secretive behaviour, were able to survive in mountain areas, which were particularly remote and segregated, both in the western and eastern Alps and the Apennines. An important study published in 1981 by the National Research Council completely ignored this species, excluding it from Italian fauna. Instead, it is on the other hand plausible that the Lynx was present at the time in this country, albeit in a quite small number.

There are multiple, much certain and coherent proof of the present existence of the Lynx in the Park, with an estimated 2-3 pairs, while significant evidence emerges from other central and partly southern Apennine areas. Although one cannot obviously exclude the hypothesis of clandestine immission or liberation by unknown persons, the objective situation - perfectly wild, elusive specimens, used to the territory and linked to particular zones, often the same ones where their presence had been historically observed for various decades - inclines us towards the most reasonable and plausible explanation: that is to say the actual survival of small original vestigial nuclei, greatly favoured today by the improved environment protection and the increasing availability of prey. The creation Wildlife Areas for the Lynx in the Park (there are three at present) has certainly played a role as a powerful "catalyst", while the renewal and intensification of observation and research conducted by the Italian Lynx Group confirms the accuracy of the data already acquired on the subject.

Future safeguard targets strive to consolidate the strategy adopted by the Park up to now, obviously excluding any hypothesis of re-introduction from outside due to the extreme importance of this population, presumably autochthonous, the morphological, genetic, ethological and ecological characteristics of which deserve to be seriously studied in depth.

5. RED DEER

(*Cervus elaphus hippelaphus*)

The re-introduction of Red Deer into the Park was initiated in the year 1971 and was concluded in 1975: about 70 specimens of alpine origin were brought in (from the National Parks of Triglav in Slovenia, Engadin

COMITATO PARCHI NAZIONALI E RISERVE ANALOGHE - ITALIA -

Creato nel 1994 come Operazione speciale di sinergia ambientale tra due delle più autorevoli e antiche istituzioni Italiane di Conservazione - il Parco Nazionale d'Abruzzo, un'Organizzazione Pubblica sorta nel 1922, e il Comitato Parchi Nazionali e Riserve Analoghe, un'Organizzazione non Governativa nata nel 1977 - il **Centro Parchi** costituisce oggi il principale punto di riferimento sull'autentica realtà della Conservazione della Natura in Italia.

Created in 1994 as a joint-venture by two of the most authoritative and ancient Italian Conservation Institutions - the Abruzzo National Park, a Public Agency established in 1922, and the Italian Committee of National Parks and Nature Reserves, a Non-Governmental Organization born in 1977 - the **Parks Centre** *is the main reference point about the true situation of Nature Conservation in Italy.*

Parco Nazionale d'Abruzzo

CENTRO PARCHI PARKS CENTRE

VIALE TITO LIVIO, 12 - 00136 ROMA (Italy) ☎ (06) 35403331 (06) 35403253 TELEX 624550 NAT PAR I

in Switzerland and the Bavarian Forest in Germany), due to the lack of Apennine authochthonous populations to which to resort.

The insertion in the ecosystem was harmonious, without the imbalances and damages to the forest cover suggested by some, and expansion into the adjacent territories appeared constant, a fact most probably due to the presence of predators. The present population in the Park seems to be around 500-600 deer, and now seems to be fully established in the area.

Future protection targets concern merely the consolidation of the policy applied by the Park up to now.

6. ROE DEER
(*Capreolus capreolus*)

The re-introduction of the Roe Deer was started in the year 1970 and concluded in 1976: about 60 specimens of alpine origin were freed altogether. Other solutions were impractical due to the fact, on the one hand, that the above mentioned scarce and localized authochthonous Apennine nuclei were too limited, differentiated and vulnerable to be used, on the other hand the more abundant northern population, like the one in Tuscany, did not provide any guarantee of purity and of native origin.

This choice gave place to rather lively discussions, as a possible genetic divergence of Apennine populations with respect to the Alpine ones could not be excluded *a priori* (though it was neither known nor demonstrated). Anyway, the Park authorities made the clear decision to give priority, with respect to possible differences at infraspecific or most probably infrasubspecific level, to the need to restore the completeness of the ecosystem, ecological balance and the endogenous capacity of the environment for self-sustainment.

Although the increase of the Roe Deer has been slower and a bit more delayed compared to the deer, and its diffusion has grown in a less obviously noticeable way, the present population in the Park is nonetheless estimated at 300-400. Most probably, it is notably underestimated as an accurate survey has not yet been carried on.

Also in this case, future protection targets concern merely the consolidation of the policy adopted by the Park up until now.

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Parco Nazionale d'abruzzo

Parco Nazionale d'Abruzzo

per la protezione dell'ambiente naturale nell'Appennino

WHY THIS PARK IS REALLY SPECIAL

The **Abruzzo National Park,** inaugurated in 1922 by private initiative thanks to its Autonomous Agency established in 1921, and therefore the oldest National Park in Italy, is internationally considered as pilot-organisation in nature conservation: an example that most of the modern Parks, not only in our Country, are trying to imitate. During the last quarter of the Century the history of our Park has been marked by continuous and innovating efforts devoted to meet the urgent needs of nature protection and those of development. The Abruzzo National Park was the first one to show - not only theoretically but in practice - that the protection of the environment has positive effects and economic advantages such as income and employment. Moreover, it has promoted controlled cultural visits in the Park, has "invented" a special agreement system with local Communities in order to overcome the controversies in the urbanistic field, has created the Zoning System in the territory in order to reconciliate protection and development: in other words, has managed with success a policy of "eco-development", mainly based on the modern "eco-tourism".

The real projects carried out for the first time in a large and modern National Park range from the first **Visitor Centre** among Italian National Parks, created in 1969 in Pescasseroli, to the first scientific group working in a European Park, the **Apennine Centre for Ecological Research**, created in 1972; from the first "**Wildlife Area**" for the Apennine Wolf at Civitella Alfedena, created in 1971, to the first **Strict Nature Reserve**, the Camosciara, created in 1972.

The Abruzzo National Park has achieved impressive results for the protection of the most endangered species, creating the **Italy Wolf Group** for the protection of the Apennine Wolf in 1974, the **Italy Chamois Group** for the safeguard of the Abruzzo Chamois in 1978, the **Italy Bear Group** for the protection of the Abruzzo Brown Bear in 1983 whilst in 1993 the **Italy Lynx Group** has been created to sustain the "return" of this wonderful feline in our Country. Furthermore, from 1977, the Park gives hospitality and support to the **Italian Committee for National Parks and Equivalent Reserves**, engaged in the creation and support of a vast "system" of protected areas, including both land and sea, in our Country. Then the Park has launched in 1993 the **Biodiversity Project** for the global consideration of its rich wildlife. Finally, the Park created in 1994 the **Parks Centre** in Rome, in order to promote a better knowledge and awareness in the field of Nature Conservation through Protected Areas.

Those who wish to acquire a deeper knowledge of the Park have just to contact one of its Visitor Centres including a Wildlife Area, such as: Civitella Alfedena for the Apennine Wolf and the Lynx, Opi and Castenuovo a Volturno for the Abruzzo Chamois, Villavallelonga for the Red Deer, Bisegna for the Roe Deer and San Sebastiano for the Insects, without forgetting the re-newed Pescasseroli Visitor Centre, adjacent to the well-known Wildlife Park and to the new Apennine Garden. Visitors can also address themselves to the various local Information Offices of the Park, open all year round and placed in the main villages. A rich series of publications provides full information and orientation.

Abruzzo National Park, December 1997

Parco Nazionale d'Abruzzo

IDENTITY CARD OF ABRUZZO NATIONAL PARK

- **CREATION:** 1922 by private initiative, 1923 by law
- **RESPONSIBLE AUTHORITY:** Abruzzo National Park
- **EXTENSION:** 44,000 hectares (and 60,000 hectares of Buffer Zone)
- **INTERESTED REGIONS:** Abruzzo, Latium and Molise
- **INTERESTED LOCAL COMMUNITIES:** Pescasseroli, Opi, Villetta Barrea, Civitella Alfedena, Barrea and Alfedena (Alto Sangro); Bisegna, Gioia dei Marsi, Lecce nei Marsi and Villavallelonga (Marsica Fucense); Scanno (Valle del Sagittario); Alvito, Campoli Appennino, San Donato Val Comino, Settefrati, Picinisco and San Biagio Saracinisco (Val di Comino); Pizzone, Castel San Vincenzo, Rocchetta a Volturno, Scapoli and Filignano (Mainarde)
- **RIVERS:** Sangro, Melfa, Giovenco and Volturno
- **LAKES:** Barrea, Vivo, Pantaniello, Montagna Spaccata, Castel San Vincenzo and Selva
- **MOUNTAINS:** Petroso (2249 m), Marsicano (2245 m), Greco (2285 m) and Meta (2242 m)
- **VISITORS:** about 2 millions people per year
- **VOLUNTEERS:** about 1,000 per year
- **TERRITORIES OWNED:** about 400 hectares
- **FORESTS AND PASTURES ABOVE TIMBERLINE CONTROLLED:** about 20,000 hectares
- **STRICT NATURE RESERVES:** about 4,000 hectares
- **FLORA:** about 1,980 species of superior Plants
- **FAUNA:** 60 species of Mammalians
  230 species of Birds
  40 species of Reptiles and Amphibians
  Marsican Brown Bear: 70-100 specimens
  Abruzzo Chamois: 500-600 specimens
  Lynx: 8-10 specimens
  Red-Deer: 500-600 specimens
  Roe-Deer: 500-600 specimens
  Apennine Wolf: 40-50 specimens
- **EMPLOYEES:** about 80 permanent, about 120 temporary co-operators
- **BUDGET:** about 9 billion Liras per year
- **ECONOMIC ADVANTAGES TO THE LOCAL COMMUNITY:** about 300 billion Liras per year of "economic impact" for the district.

Abruzzo National Park, December 1997

Appennino
Centro Nazionale per la protezione dell'ambiente naturale nell'appennino

THE BASIC DATES OF ABRUZZO NATIONAL PARK

1907 First proposal for a National Park in Abruzzo

1917 First definite project for the Park

1921 Rental of the first part of the Park (500 hectares) by Pro Montibus Association

1922 Official Inauguration of the Park (12,000 hectares)

1923 Legislative institution of the Park (18,000 hectares)

1925 First expansion of the Park (28,000 hectares)

1926 Second expansion of the Park (30,000 hectares)

1933 Abolition of the National Park Authority

1950 Re-establishment of the National Park Authority

1958 Beginning of the tourist and building speculation

1964 Following the inspection made by the IUCN, the international scandal breaks out

1969 Resettlement of the Direction; the recover is on the way

1970 Creation of the Buffer Zone (60,000 hectares)

1976 Third expansion of the Park (40,000 hectares)

1980 First carrying-out of the Park's Master Plan

1984 Introduction of the Zonation System in the Park

1985 Strengthening of the Plan with Zonation and Agreements

1987 Final approval of the Zonation System

1988 Hunting forbidden in the Buffer Zone

1989 Civitella bursting case: demonstration of Park's benefits

1990 Fourth expansion of the Park (44,000 hectares)

1992 Seventy years of life of the Park

1993 Consolidation of the Buffer Zone

1994 Opening of the Parks Centre in Rome

1997 75th Anniversary of Park's Foundation.

Abruzzo National Park, December 1997

Parco Nazionale d'Abruzzo

per la protezione dell'ambiente naturale nell'appennino

Parco Nazionale d'Abruzzo

per la protezione dell'ambiente naturale nell'appennino

PARK'S REHABILITATION FIGURES

- **14,000** hectares more of **Protected Nature** (Marsicano and Mainarde)
- **4,000** hectares of **Strict Nature Reserve** (Camosciara - Feudo)
- **60,000** hectares of **Buffer Zone**
- **150 Ecotourist Trails**
- **50** km of **Roads closed** to vehicles
- **70-100 Marsican Brown Bears** continuously protected
- **40-50 Apennine Wolves** continuously protected
- **500-600 Abruzzo Chamois** (from 150-200) progressively increasing
- **500-600 Red Deers** (from 0) thanks to the reintroduction operated by the Park
- **300-400 Roe Deers** (from 0) thanks to the reintroduction operated by the Park
- **7 Visitor Centres** in operation (+ various others to be realised)
- **10 Information Offices** (+ various to be realised)
- **5 Wildlife Areas** (+ various to be realised)
- **10 Mountain Refuges**
- **80** permanent and **120** temporary **Employees**
- **10 Juvenile Co-operative Organisations** in activity
- **2,000,000 Visitors** per year (including about **3,000** groups)
- **300** billion liras of **Economic Impact** per year to the local community thanks to ecotourism in the Park
- **150** billion liras as **Public Expenditure** in the district for Park's conservation in the last twenty years
- **80 Scientific Researches** carried out
- **20,000** hectares of **Forests and Pastures under Park control**
- **1,000** million liras spent for **Forest and Pasture Protection** every year
- **6,000,000 Trees saved** from being harvested.

Abruzzo National Park, December 1997

TEN RULES FOR "THE PERFECT VISITOR" OF A NATIONAL PARK

Love for nature must not be destructive. Imagine what could happen if everybody picked a flower, wrote their name on a secular tree trunk, or threw paper on the ground. Love for nature must become a real positive value.

A conscientious, well informed and sensitive visitor is the most reliable guarantee for the safe-keeping of a National Park.

National Parks belong to everyone: help us to preserve them for future visitors too.

1. Become well informed about the National Park before and during your visit: examine its problems closely and discuss them with other interested parties. Go to the Visitor's Information Centres or to other meeting points in the National Park.

2. When you are in the National Park, try to behave in the best possible "ecological" way: consume very little and do not disturb. Remember that noises, vandalisms and littering are the visiting cards of ill-bred people.

3. Use your motor-vehicles only to reach the National Park and travel through its main roads; do not enter the heart of nature by car. No racing, no four wheel driving, no gymkhanas and no rides in cars of motorcycles through the fields and woods; no rides on motorboats. Motor-vehicles should be used as little as possible and should never be driven off the roads.

4. Take a few naturalistic itineraries on foot (when possible by horse or mule). Enjoy the distance from modern society and from technology. Try to better understand the environment and identify yourself with nature.

5. Do not pick up flowers, do not break branches or carve into tree trunks. Do not light fires (only in suitable areas). You could cause a serious fire and significantly contribute to the impoverishment of the natural environment.

6. Do not bring dogs along (not even on the leash), guitars or radios. Do bring a binocular, a camera and a map to experience and feel in the best way the world surrounding yourself.

7. If you have the good fortune to see any wild animals, have the good sense to behave with respect and discretion. Do not squawk or pursue them, but enjoy in blank silence those precious instants of direct contact with nature, which is becoming more rare in this world and which you will never forget.

8. Park rangers are very busy in their jobs. There is little personnel and much work to be done, therefore, not everything can always be perfect. Try not to

intensify problems with useless discussions and, when you can, show understanding and give help: they will always be appreciated.

9. Report immediately the staff or to the management of the National Park any problems which you may have noticed so that they can act quickly to find a solution.

10. If you enjoyed your experience with the National Park, become a supporter of the nature. There are many ways - for nature lovers - to limit or remedy the damages created by most people who still destroy or ignore nature.

"Leave nothing but your footprints. Do not take away anything but your photos, memories and sensations".

(National Park Service)

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